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ABSTRACT

Compensation strategies, the attempts made by non-native speakers to remedy the disparity between their communication needs and the linguistic tools at their disposal, are examined. Two tactics for non-native speakers are distinguished: that of averting problems by acting on oneself, and that of averting problems by acting on one's interlocutor. The control system which makes it possible to regulate non-foreseeable problems arising from the difficulties in interacting with native speakers is explicated. Spontaneous conversation between native and non-native speakers and the pedadgogics of compensation are examined. The problems of training non-natives in the use of compensation methods, and the role of the language class as a place for teaching the methods are discussed. Compensation is viewed as an important factor in the development of communicative and linguistic competence. (RW)

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Compensation strategies

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Autumn 1983

COMPENSATION STRATEGIES

by

E. M. HARDING

INTRODUCTION

> "La tactique ruine la stratégie. La bataille d'ensemble gagnée sur la carte est perdue en détail sur les coteaux."
>
> (P. VALERY)

The domain of compensation strategies must be precisely defined. It is the domain of attempts made by non-native speakers of a language to remedy the disparity that exists between their communicative needs and the linguistic tools at their disposal.

We shall distinguish between two quite separate aspects: firstly, compensation strategies of a preventive or anticipatory character - that is, everything the non-native speaker does consciously in order to resolve the crisis which arises when he realizes that the linguistic resources he possesses in the second language are inadequate for carrying out his communicative intentions; secondly, compensation strategies of a therapeutic character - that is, the means by which communicative problems are compensated for during interaction between natives and non-natives, and in particular the repair procedure (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977), since this procedure seems to operate more especially when one of the participants is not yet proficient in the language.

The function of these two types of strategy is the same: to counterbalance in one way or another the negative effects of the non-native's deficit. But the differences between them are important. On the one hand, the two types of strategy differ with regard to the moment when the decision to act is taken. In the case of prevention, the decision is taken before the presumed problematic element appears. The work of compensation is thus

carried out between the moment when the speaker realizes the danger and the moment when a solution is adopted. In other words, if compensation succeeds, the interlocutor will not notice that any problem existed. In the case of repair, however, the compensatory action necessarily begins after the appearance of a problematic element which is identified as such by one or other of the participants. In the case of prevention, on the other hand, the problem can be identified only by the speaker himself. Similarly, in prevention the speaker is necessarily the initiating agent of the strategy, whereas in the case of repair either the speaker or his interlocutor may be the initiating agent.

In the end perhaps the most important difference between these two types of strategy lies in the actual nature of what is creating the problem. In the case of preventive strategies the non-native compensates for a lack - i.e. the elements for which he compensates are not known to him, or if they are known, they are not accessible to him or realizable by him. In the case of repair, on the contrary, the problematic element can be located but usually the non-native has not in any way foreseen that it is a potential source of trouble. In both cases, however, the function of compensation will be to prevent a breakdown of communication.

This study is organized in three parts. The first part deals with compensation strategies of a preventive character. It should be pointed out here that we prefer the term "compensation strategies" to "communication strategies" for several reasons. "Communication strategies" have been defined as any "systematic attempt by the learner to express or decode meaning in the target language, in situations where the appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed" (Tarone, Cohen and Dumas 1976). We would stress here that we wish to exclude demonstrations of unconscious communication strategies (Tarone, Frauenfelder and Selinker 1976), but this terminology may easily lead to confusion since a learner may consciously and deliberately use a process such as transfer (Corder 1978). We thus wish to emphasize the conscious character of the strategies used by learners to compensate for their deficiencies (Tarone 1977, Varadi 1973). Lastly, we believe that the compensation strategies of non-natives have certain specific characteristics compared with the retrieval strategies of natives when they "are unable to find their words" (Tarone 1977). While it is true that "all language users adopt strategies to convey their meaning, but we are only able more or less readily to perceive these when the speaker is not a native speaker" (Corder 1978), we feel it necessary to point out that the non-native's problem is to compensate at all times and at all levels whenever he has to communicate with a proficiency which is not yet developed. To some extent he should be compared with a child, but he is an adult whose cognitive development has been completed, and that is precisely one of the reasons why he can work out complex compensatory strategies. We thus prefer the term "compensation" for clarity's sake.

In any study of preventive strategies it is necessary to

explain what is meant by the learner's deficit. These strategies are not determined by his awareness of a lack in relation to a known standard. The notion of a deficit which might be measured or characterized by (as it were) subtracting the system accessible to the non-native at a given point of his development from the target system is not relevant here. In other words, if a non-native "suffers" from a linguistic deficit this is a very real problem for him, but the description of the difference existing between the learner's grammar and the target grammar cannot be used for analysing compensation strategies, for this deficit has no psychological reality for the non-native at the moment of communication. The only thing he knows is that he lacks "something" he needs in order to express himself or to understand, and to describe it is at most a way of accounting for one of the reasons why he displays compensatory behaviour.

A grammar of the learner's language makes it possible to predict his grammatical mistakes, and a grammar of the learner's use of the language makes it possible to predict his mistakes as regards the appropriateness of certain speech acts; but neither the one nor the other enables us to predict (i) what a non-native will do in order to anticipate or avert a problem, or to correct a mistake after it has been made, and (ii) the means he will employ to do this.

In the first part of this paper we shall try to answer the question: what can a non-native do to avert problems? Here we shall distinguish between two tactics: that of averting problems by acting on oneself, and that of averting problems by acting on one's interlocutor; and we shall try to analyse the factors which influence the use of preventive compensation strategies. Obviously it would be of great pedagogical importance to be able to assign them a value in terms of chances of success.

The second part of the paper deals with the control system which makes it possible to regulate non-foreseeable problems that arise from the difficulties experienced by the non-native in his interaction with the native. For an analysis of authentic spontaneous conversation between a native and a non-native makes it possible to observe how the operation of the repair procedure (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977) leads to compensation, but may also interact with certain preventive compensation strategies. It will be noted that an analysis carried out using this framework necessarily includes all the participants in the conversation. Compensation strategies are not the concern of one interactor only. At all levels of discourse structure - interaction, illocution, content, means of realization (Riley 1980) - these strategies will affect the activities of all the participants because they all need to "make sense" of what is happening and to make their speech coherent in accordance with the aims of the transaction that is taking place. This is an important point since, even if the degree of the non-native's linguistic and communicative development may be expected to play a role, the reason why he compensates and the extent to which compensation strategies are displayed will depend on a negotiation between the

participants as to what constitutes a satisfactory transaction. As we shall see, this negotiation is often problematic and frustrating for the non-native, and the self-image and personality traits of the participants play a major role here.

It will be noted in particular that during conversation there is no reason why the non-grammaticality of an utterance or the inappropriateness of a speech act should necessarily give rise to compensation strategies if the participants do not regard them as threatening the coherence of the discourse to the extent of undermining their negotiated agreement as to what constitutes satisfactory communication.

On the other hand, it may well happen that something which is grammatical and appropriate destroys the coherency of the discourse at another level. If, for instance, another pupil answers the teacher instead of his neighbour (error with respect to the identification of the person to whom the question is addressed), the teacher may use his authority to interrupt the activity in progress and "admonish" the "offender" because he caused the coherence of the discourse at this level to be destroyed - i.e. the pupil has broken the accepted rule that in class one answers only when one is questioned.

We shall therefore analyse conversations to see whether compensation rules exist which, if applied, would prevent the communication from breaking down. We thus refer here to compensation strategies which are of a therapeutic character, and in particular to the question of how to use the remedies.

The third part of the paper deals with the pedagogics of compensation. We shall consider first the problem of training non-natives in the use of methods which enable them to compensate for preventive purposes, and secondly the question of the language class seen as a place for teaching the repair procedure. We shall try to show that, although this procedure may call into question certain pedagogical correction tactics, it is also one of the most natural and powerful means the teacher can imagine for helping the learner to learn.

1. COMPENSATION STRATEGIES WITH A PREVENTIVE FUNCTION

> "Quand on n'a pas ce qu'on désire, il faut se contenter de ce qu'on a."
>
> M. FENOUILLARD, Christophe

The learner is constantly faced with communication situations in which he lives beyond his linguistic means - that is, he wants to express messages which his linguistic resources do not enable him to convey. Corder (1978) sums up the situation as follows: "He has only two options open to him. He can either tailor his message to the resources he has available, that is, adjust his ends to his means. These procedures we can call Message Adjustment strategies .... Or, he can attempt to increase his resources by one means or another in order to realize his communicative intentions. These strategies we can call Resource Expansion strategies."

Very few studies have been carried out on compensation strategies. A first taxonomy proposed by Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976) revealed the difficulties encountered by researchers in distinguishing between learning strategies and "communication" strategies, for this taxonomy included a "transfer" category and an "over-generalization" category. One could also observe here, as Kasper points out (1979), a confusion between a process and the results of a process: the "prefabricated patterns", which are in a separate category, are in reality - the authors themselves seem to indicate this - the results of the transfer process. This confusion (see also Levenston 1971) is important inasmuch as a particular process may have very different linguistic manifestations and different processes may reveal themselves under identical forms (Kasper 1979).

These pitfalls are avoided in Tarone's 1977 study, which will be our main source. In this study, Tarone not only insists on the deliberate use of the observed strategies, but also shows that her subjects are thereby enabled to express what they were trying to express. Furthermore, Tarone's experiment controls an essential variable: the communicative intention of her subjects; for they are required to comment on a series of pictures, and perform the task in their first language before doing so in the second language. This situation makes it possible to observe very closely the operation of the strategies attempted by the pupils in order to avoid failing to carry out a productive task - that is, what we have called preventive compensation strategies.

As far as I know no experimental study exists which uses a reception task. The choice of the term "communication strategies" instead of the term "production strategies" (Tarone, Frauenfelder and Selinker 1976) was explicitly meant to indicate

that certain strategies are valid for both production and understanding, but this aspect has not yet been explored. We shall try to illustrate this by examples whenever possible.

Finally, in this section we shall take into account the fact that the non-native may obviate the difficulties by controlling his own linguistic resources, but that he can also obviate his own difficulties by acting on his interlocutor.

1.1 Compensation by action on oneself

1.1.1 Message adjustment strategies

All the following strategies show how a non-native may sacrifice all or part of his communicative intentions in order to avoid the breakdown to which his difficulties would lead. Avoidance strategies may appear very negative; after all, to opt for a "zero message" constitutes a failure for someone who wanted to say something. Some people prefer simply to keep out of situations in which they might be forced to use such a strategy. For example, if one cannot make purchases in the foreign language, one may choose to buy without speaking and without risk in a supermarket. But it is not always possible to forestall events at this level, and if to do something silently is the only way of maintaining interaction with one's interlocutor, avoidance may then assume a compensatory value (Corder 1978).

1.1.1.1 Avoidance of the subject or zero message

(Tarone, Cohen and Dumas 1976; Tarone, Frauenfelder and Selinker 1976; Tarone 1977; Corder 1978)

One can observe this strategy whenever the non-native refrains from speaking about things which he feels himself incapable of expressing in the second language, either because he does not know the necessary vocabulary or because what he wants to say about them is too complex. He therefore decides to sacrifice the subject. We must remember that he would have mentioned it had he been able. In such cases he switches to something else.

It is the fact that communication continues which is the test of the success of the compensation strategy.

This strategy can also be observed in the field of understanding. For example, when summarizing a long text non-natives often prefer not to mention a subject they find hard to identify (Long and Harding-Esch

1978).

1.1.1.2 Abandonment of the message

(Varadi 1973; Tarone, Cohen and Dumas 1976; Tarone 1977; Corder 1978)

The non-native starts to speak about something but realizes he cannot continue, stops for a moment and then moves on to something else. This phenomenon seems to show a malfunctioning of the non-native's self-censoring system. He had illusions about his capacities and decided too late to avoid the topic. However, even in the case of a planning error or of an avoidance strategy that was not carried out, the examples given by Tarone (1977) show that her subjects immediately recover and successfully apply the strategy of avoiding the topic in the next sentence. There has been no breakdown in the communication.

In a receptive task the adoption of a similar strategy would be found in written summaries in which a pupil has erased the beginning of a sentence because he realized he could not continue owing to his faulty understanding.

1.1.1.3 Semantic avoidance or "approximation"

(Varadi's "meaning replacement", 1973; Tarone, Cohen and Dumas 1976; Corder 1978)

One can observe this strategy whenever the non-native tries to avoid a particular content or form by using connected concepts which may imply the desired content. This is thus a far more satisfactory strategy in the sense that, although a sacrifice is accepted, an alternative solution is offered by way of compensation. The examples given in Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976) seem to indicate that this is a typical strategy employed by the non-native when he is obliged to maintain the coherence of a conversation. For example, a learner who cannot yet use the subjunctive in Spanish (but knows that the expected reply requires the use of the subjunctive) answers the question:

Qué quieren los pajaros que haga la mama?
[What do the birds want their mother to do?]

by saying:

Quiéren comer. [They want to eat.]

that is, they want their mother to give them something

to eat because they are hungry.

At the interactive level the learner must take his turn, at the illocutionary level he must answer a question. He realizes that the expected propositional content will oblige him to use a form he does not know or does not know how to employ. He therefore resorts to an expedient which enables him to maintain coherence by using a propositional content which implies the expected content but which he can achieve without difficulty.

A similar strategy from the receptive point of view might be revealed when a non-native, summarizing a text, refers to secondary details which suggest that he has understood what they relate to, whereas in reality he has not understood the connection between the elements.

1.1.1.4 Modality reduction

We feel we should mention this strategy, studied by Kasper (1979), for it is defined as a sub-category of the "meaning reduction" strategy (Varadi 1973) and as a message adjustment strategy. Kasper tries to describe the process whereby non-natives perform speech acts (here, to express their grievances) which seem to have virtually no modality. Modality here is regarded as a pragmatic category which would be the verbal expression of politeness. "Speech Act modality can be expressed by different degrees of directness and various types of modality markers" (Kasper 1979).

This strategy can be regarded as a compensation strategy only when it operates in accordance with the third process proposed by Kasper - that is, when the learner is aware of the need to modalize his speech acts but does not succeed in achieving this linguistically. This is an extreme case because, if the learner is really aware of the need for this linguistic realization, then compensation will presumably take the form either of an abandonment of the attempt to perform this speech act - particularly if it is a potentially offensive act such as a complaint - or of the simultaneous use of the non-modalized linguistic realization and other resources, particularly non-verbal ones, which will "replace" the absent modality.

In the field of understanding, this strategy would correspond to the frequently observed strategy that consists of realizing that one does not properly understand modalization and, for instance, of not taking offence at certain speech acts.

In this case the non-native performs an act of faith by accepting the fact that what he has understood of the propositional content does not reflect the speaker's presumed intentions. These intentions are judged by means of non-linguistic data (they are friends, for example).

1.1.2 Resource expansion strategies

1.1.2.1 Expansion of second language resources

1.1.2.1.1 Paraphrase

We will use Tarone's 1977 definition of paraphrase: "the rewording of the message in an alternate, acceptable target language construction, in situations where the appropriate form or construction is not known or not yet stable".

It will be noted that in order to compensate successfully using paraphrase the non-native must be capable of quickly reshaping and reorganizing his message at the semantic level. It can therefore be expected that this strategy will not be accessible to all learners.

The following paraphrase strategies can be distinguished:

Approximation: "the use of a single target language vocabulary item or structure, which the learner knows is not correct, but which shares enough semantic features in common with the desired item to satisfy the learner" (Tarone 1977). At the level of the individual word this strategy may be interpreted as revealing the process of searching for words with the aid of semantic fields, as described by Glahn (1978). An example given by Tarone is the use of what Levenston (1971) calls "high-coverage words" such as "worm" for "silkworm". One thinks too of words such as "truc", "machin", "bidule" in French. An example of a "low-coverage" word is the use of "labour" for "work". Tarone points out in this connection that the learning strategy of over-generalization often leads to the same result on the surface, but that the difference between overgeneralization and compensation by approximation is that in the latter case "the learner knows that the term is

wrong but uses it anyway".

Invention of words ("word coinage" is the term used by Varadi 1973). This creative effort on the part of the learner wishing to compensate for gaps in his vocabulary is one of the compensation strategies specific to second language learners, whereas approximation is not only very common as a compensation technique in the mother tongue but is also used systematically by interpreters working in simultaneous interpreting (La Grand 1977) - in other words at a very high level of proficiency in the second language. The examples quoted by Tarone, "airball" for "balloon" (Varadi's example) and "person worm" and "jugworm" for a human "caterpillar" as seen at carnivals and similar festivities, show that this type of compensation presupposes that the learner knows the rules of word formation. It is thus not something that every beginner is capable of.

Circumlocution (Varadi's 1973 term). Tarone defines this strategy as follows: "a wordy extended process in which the learner describes the characteristics or elements of the object or action instead of using the appropriate target language structure .... For example, in describing a waterpipe [i.e. a narghile] a subject in [her] study said: 'She is, uh, smoking something. I don't know what's its name. That's, uh, Persian, and we use in Turkey, a lot of.'" It is in the use of circumlocution that one can observe the value for the learner of being able to reorganize the information concerning an element in several ways and repeatedly. The more capable he is of approaching an unknown term from different angles, the more linguistic alternatives he will have at his disposal for compensation purposes.

1.1.2.1.2 Clarification and request for information about the language

Here we should mention the conscious strategies used by the learner the moment he realizes he does not know how to pronounce a word. He may, for example, spell the word which he knows only in its written form. We have also seen learners offer their interlocutor the choice between two pronunciations when the accentuation is not known: "he wanted to buy a re'cord or 'record."

This type of compensation may make use of visual communication; for instance, the learner may take a piece of paper and write down the word he cannot pronounce or which he can pronounce but without ever being understood. The student who stops to look up a word in the dictionary and shows it to his interlocutor is using the same strategy.

It will be noted that the effect of these strategies is to make the student's discourse ambiguous inasmuch as he accomplishes two speech acts simultaneously: he succeeds in giving information about a picture (for example) and at the same time requests information about the pronunciation of a word, by reason of the compensation strategy he uses.

When a non-native knows that he is unable to pronounce certain sounds or groups of sounds, he may consciously compensate by simplifying his task at the level of articulation, for example by using epenthesis (Tarone, Cohen and Dumas 1976) or omitting certain contractions. This type of compensation may present dangers, especially because it may lead to over-emphatc pronunciation and accentuation, but this is - at least temporarily - regarded as the lesser evil.

1.1.2.2 Expansion of linguistic resources by the conscious use of other languages

1.1.2.2.1 Conscious transfer: literal translation (Tarone 1977; Corder 1978)

Here again we should point out that conscious transfer must not be confused with cases of transfer due to interference by the first language with the second. An example of structural interference (quoted by Mackey 1962) is the phrase "une des plus grandes jamais vues dans la région", used by an Englishman who did not realize that it is a calque of "one of the biggest ever seen in the area". We could use the same example to illustrate the result of the strategy of conscious transfer, the learner in this case being perfectly aware of the fact that it is a calque. Not knowing what to say in French, he has deliberately chosen to translate the English word for word.

1.1.2.2.2 Borrowings (Corder 1978; Tarone 1977)

To make borrowings (from the mother tongue or a third language) is a highly productive compensation strategy, and one which makes it possible to "save face". It is often to be observed in bilingual situations when the participants, although they know the vocabulary and constructions of both languages, acquire the habit of relying on the language to which they have the easier access at any given moment, counting on the fact that their interlocutors will understand. Although one might think that this is a lazy solution, borrowings can prove very useful to non-natives who are not yet proficient in the second language.

In the example "il prépare un papier pour une conférence" the English word "paper" has been imported and translated because the French words "article" and "communication" were unknown or not accessible at the right moment. In "il va 'checker' sa voiture au garage", the verb "check" has been transformed into a regular French verb, and in "ils partent en hovercraft" (ɔverkraft) the word has been changed at the phonetic level.

Borrowings are often the result of the process, observed by Glahn (1978), whereby the non-native tries to find a word by using the other languages he knows.

1.1.2.2.3 Language switching (Tarone, Cohen and Dumas 1976; Tarone 1977; Corder 1978)

As a last resort a learner may use constructions or words from his mother tongue. Tarone notes that, as far as vocabulary is concerned, this happens more especially when the learner knows that the word in his mother tongue resembles the word in the second language with regard to form or content (Turkish "balon" for English "balloon", for instance). This compensation strategy may also be a kind of guarantee when the non-native wants to talk about cultural or institutional aspects peculiar to his country. By choosing not even to try to translate, he indicates to his interlocutor that he doubts whether his language can really express a particular concept and thus obliges his interlocutor to interpret what he says in the context of a different cultural scene (Fillmore 1977).

1.1.2.3 Resource expansion by maximum use of non-linguistic methods

1.1.2.3.1 Mime

One does not have to be a Marceau in order to be able to make oneself understood by gestures. Mime is chiefly used as an adjunct, for indicating directions or movements when the appropriate verbs or particles are unknown; it can also be very effective when combined with circumlocution or approximation.

1.1.2.3.2 Onomatopoeia, singing

An example would be, "He picks up his gun and 'bang, bang' [+ gesture] the man dies." If one does not know the verb "to shoot", this is a very effective way of filling the gap. Similarly, a few bars of "God Save the Queen" may successfully render "they sing the national anthem".

1.1.2.3.3 Drawings, diagrams

This strategy does not call for the histrionic qualities demanded by the previous one. It is constantly used in mother-tongue conversations and is extremely useful for checking one's own understanding.

1.1.2.3.4 "Fillers"

Lastly, we should mention a strategic aid which is essential for compensation: "fillers" such as "well", "uh", etc., used deliberately in order to give oneself the time to take decisions while keeping one's turn in the interaction. It will be noted that many of them will be regarded as showing the repair procedure in operation (see section 2 below). This reveals how a clever learner can play a double game and use the external signs of the repair procedure - more especially the Error Correction Format (Jefferson 1973) for the avoidance of errors - as a cover for achieving better preventive compensation. For whether the repairs are authentic or not, their effect will be to slow down the alternation of turns and thus to enable the non-native to gain time for organizing himself.

1.2 Compensation by action on one's interlocutor

1.2.1 Signalling devices

1.2.1.1 Early warning signals

We refer here to all the verbal precautions which a non-native may take in order to warn his interlocutor that he does not know the language well, that his interlocutor must not speak too quickly, etc. These precautions are notoriously ineffective and are usually regarded as a sign of excessive modesty. In cases where the interlocutor tries to speak more slowly, his efforts usually last only a few minutes, provided the situation does not require constant checking that the non-native is following.

1.2.1.2 Signals en route

Some non-natives develop a strategy which enables them to indicate to their interlocutor that they are making sacrifices as regards the message in the interest of maintaining communication, and this even at a not very advanced level. The methods used are usually routines such as "you know what I mean", "or something like that" added at the end of the utterance the non-native has had to cut short. It will be noted that the Error Correction Format (word 1 + hesitation + word 2) also performs this function at word level (Jefferson 1973).

The other signs we have observed were non-verbal alarm signals to stop someone who was speaking too fast: crossed arms hiding the face or even hands flat over the ears - these two strategies are inelegant but have an immediate effect.

1.2.1.3 Calls for help (Tarone, Cohen and Dumas 1976; Tarone 1977; Corder 1978)

Lastly, the non-native can call on his interlocutor to give linguistic information. To call on the services of a competent human being is to appeal to his sense of co-operation; but as we shall see, this is more difficult to achieve during an interaction than one might suppose, because it necessitates a change of topic, and that has to be negotiated. It is thus a potentially very rich strategy but usually fails and becomes the subject of repair.

1.2.2 Linguistic imperialism

When the non-native knows that his interlocutor understands his own language, he may try to make him conduct the conversation in his mother tongue. This is an avoidance strategy which may be satisfactory when the choice of language is negotiated in advance. But it may also result from the non-native's capitulation during the conversation. It is, in short, a linguistic Pyrrhic victory because it marks a failure to compensate.

Another similar strategy is to persuade the native to try a third common language (lingua franca) so that communication can continue.

1.3 Communicative value of preventive or anticipatory compensation strategies

The above taxonomy does not claim to be exhaustive, but it is useful insofar as it shows that non-natives have many devices at their disposal for avoiding the problems that arise from the difficulties they have in producing and understanding their target language. What can be said about the problems created by attempts to utilize these numerous resources?

1.3.1 Operational characteristics

The main characteristics of the way in which non-natives use the resources at their disposal are multidimensionality and simultaneity. For, as all investigators note, learners always employ several compensation strategies simultaneously and make maximum use of the redundancy offered by the communication channels whenever the situation permits. In reality the non-native, far from making the binary choice between message adjustment and resource expansion strategies, usually uses the latter in order to compensate for the undesired effects of the former. Thus a relaxed physical attitude and a smile can compensate for a non-modalized request. The complementary character of the strategies as regards their compensatory effect will be an essential educational tool.

1.3.2 The non-native's simplified register and processes involved in compensation

While one may regard the learner's language as being a simplified register, the processes involved in compensation are not necessarily of a simplifying character. In reality the processes which result in "paraphrase" are processes which clarify by approximation and alter the use of the language by increasing its redundancy but by adding

linguistic material. This is also true of phenomena such as the use of epenthesis or of non-contracted forms.

Other resources such as borrowings, mime or onomatopoeia are the result of a process of clarification by substitution (replacement of inaccessible or unknown linguistic elements by other linguistic or paralinguistic elements). This process adds an expressive dimension to the non-native's register but also entails some extremely complex operations.

Lastly, all "signalling devices" and calls for help seem to us to derive from a process operating not at the level of register but at the interactive level; a process of control that makes it possible to avert problems of synchronization or interpretation and that might be described as retroactive clarification of the discourse.

The complexity of the operations involved in using certain compensatory resources explains why strategies such as paraphrase are preferred by the most advanced subjects in Tarone's 1977 study. The same complexity implies that learning to use preventive compensation strategies is more than a matter of acquiring a few simple routines.

1.3.3 Factors influencing the use of resources

1.3.3.1 Internal constraints

One of the greatest merits of Tarone's 1977 study is that it shows how large a role subjects' personalities played in the selection of compensation strategies. Although the study concerns only a small number of pupils, certain of them seem to show a marked preference for avoidance strategies, whereas others, more adventurous, make full use of all the possibilities.

These individual preferences will be of decisive importance for the pedagogics of compensation. For even if one knows that certain methods of compensation are more effective than others, one cannot force learners to use strategies which they reject instinctively.

In order to assign a profitability value (Holec 1979) to the various compensatory strategies we have mentioned, one must first take into account the preferences shown by the learner.

1.3.3.2 External constraints

1.3.3.2.1 The nature of the task

Every task favours or prevents the use of certain methods. Thus in Tarone's 1977 study the task of describing pictures has the result that the compensation strategy of using drawings as a non-verbal means of clarification is not mentioned. Yet the pictures could be seen by both the subjects and the experimenter, and consequently the subjects, by pointing to certain elements in the drawings, had an ideal non-verbal resource for compensating for a whole series of lexical or referential difficulties. One can only suppose that because the pictures served the purpose of stimulus their compensating function was concealed from the researchers. Moreover, subjects who might have thought of making little drawings to compensate for certain deficiencies probably rejected this strategy as redundant because of the pictures on which they had to comment.

1.3.3.2.2 Nature of the communication channel

Some strategies are obviously unsuitable in certain situations in which only one communication channel is accessible. On the telephone, for example, even if the non-native makes gestures or diagrams to help himself, these compensating methods will only indirectly affect his interlocutor - i.e. if they enable the non-native to express himself more clearly.

1.3.3.2.3 Nature of the situation

Certain situations impose temporal contraints which considerably limit the possibility of making subtle choices. If one sees a child who is about to step into the road in front of a lorry, it is appropriate to seize his arm and shout "look out" even if the child does not understand English! But even when the situation is not dramatic it is not always easy to find an appropriate solution to compensate for certain deficiencies such as modality reduction. Someone told me recently about the case of some young Germans visiting London. Their teacher had given them the task of finding out where certain monuments in central London were situated by asking passers-by. All those who tried to make a polite enquiry failed (the passers-by did not even stop), whereas those who

planted themselves in front of someone and said "Westminster Abbey" etc. with a rising intonation obtained the information sought.

The resources actually accessible to non-natives are often far more restricted than those they apply in an experimental situation specifically designed for the purpose of observing their strategies.

1.3.3.2.4 Nature of the activity type

The more formalized and conventionalized an activity is, the more difficult it will be to use certain types of compensation, even if these are sophisticated. An extreme example would be that of a foreigner who, instead of replying "I do" at a wedding, replied "I promise to do so with all my heart", thus making the marriage illegal. But it is chiefly the strategies of avoiding the subject which seem to us to be risky. For there are many activities in which avoidance of a particular subject is possible only to the detriment of the non-native, because of the nature of the activity and the respective roles of the participants. If you go to the doctor, you cannot evade the problem of your health (you cannot talk about fashions, for instance). If you then tell him you have a stomach-ache because you do not know how to say "ingrowing toe-nail", the treatment is hardly likely to be effective.

The problem is more complex than appears at first sight because one cannot change the topic of a conversation just like that. The first topic mentioned is always regarded as the reason why the conversation is taking place. Suppose, therefore, that you decide your strategy was stupid and it would be better to explain that you have a pain in your "foot", for instance. You must nevertheless wait for the conversation about the stomach-ache to end, and then start a second conversation by saying, "By the say, I forgot to say I have a pain in my foot." In reality, except in activities of the "chatting" type, to evade a subject is a suspect strategy which usually leads to the activity turning out badly. To succeed in not answering a precise question, for instance, calls for very great skill - as one can observe in most interviews with politicians - since it involves talking volubly without giving away any information.

1.3.3.2.5 Nature of the field

Some fields are suited for the use of specific strategies and especially vocabulary borrowings. An English data-processing engineer, for example, can hold a conversation with a French colleague by borrowing practically all the vocabulary from English. In other words, whenever a language is or has been influenced by another language in a particular technical sector, this creates a semantic field from which the non-native may freely borrow when he needs to compensate for his lack of vocabulary.

1.3.3.2.6 Characteristics of the interlocutor

Considerable constraints are imposed on the non-native's choice of appropriate strategies by his interlocutor. If the interlocutor knows the non-native's language, this will make it desirable to use borrowings and literal translations or even to switch to the other language; if he does not, these methods will create confusion. If the interlocutor's status gives him certain rights (such as judging an examination or making an arrest) but also a special interactive role, the non-native should be cautious about the compensatory methods he employs. If he decides to evade a question because he cannot express himself, it would be better to keep quiet at the risk of appearing guilty or incompetent than to try changing the subject, which might be regarded as challenging the authority which the other person represents. For example, the police arrest a woman driving in town at night:

POLICEMAN: Why did you pass the red light at the last crossroads, Madam?

[Appropriate compensatory answer (she does not know "red light" or "crossroads"): silence + gesture of impotence. Probable interpretation: admission of guilt.]

WOMAN: It is a very fine night tonight.

[Breakdown at the interactive level because no answer is given to the question and the non-native has not understood that it is the discursive privilege of those in authority to perform the interactive function of initiating a conversation. The answer is thus a doubly insulting act.]

1.3.4 Success of preventive compensation strategies and taking of risks

These constraints imposed on the choice of compensatory methods show that it is not possible to guarantee the effectiveness of these strategies without taking a whole series of situational factors into account. More especially, to say that message adjustment strategies enable the learner to avoid taking risks ("risk-avoiding strategies", Corder 1978) and resource expansion strategies oblige him to take risks ("risk-taking", Corder 1978) is only a hypothesis, and one that is not always borne out. When Kasper describes the phenomenon of modality reduction and says that this strategy "belongs to the 'risk-avoiding' type of communication strategies" (Kasper 1979), there still seems to be some confusion between "risking making linguistic mistakes" and "risking a breakdown in communication". A "risky" strategy in fact is defined as one which makes the person using it run the risk of not being understood or even of failing to communicate (Corder 1978). According to this definition, the carrying out of speech acts such as complaints without apparent modality would perhaps head the list of strategies "involving risks". But we believe (cf. 1.1.1.4 above) that when the learner is obliged to use non-modalized speech acts, he compensates at the same time by adopting other methods precisely in order to eliminate the risks of which he is aware.

Similarly, we have seen that switching to another language - described as "the most risky enterprise" (Corder 1978) - may be a very lazy way of compensating for one's shortcomings, even if one's interlocutor knows the language to which one resorts. As for making an appeal to one's interlocutor - "the least risk-taking strategy of all" (Corder 1978) - we shall see that it is a strategy guaranteed to be without risk in a classroom setting where someone is paid to help the learner, but that in the world outside the classroom it seems likely to fail, at least if the learner lacks proficiency, which is just when he most needs help. Let us imagine, for instance, the following conversation in the situation described above:

POLICEMAN: Why did you pass the red light at the last crossroads, Madam?

WOMAN: Crossroads? Light?

The reasons for this misunderstanding are due, we feel, to the fact that the notion of risk can be seen as a measure of the distance separating the means the learner chooses to employ from the linguistic means which would be the most appropriate for achieving his communicative intention in the target language. The further the non-native departs from the means offered by his target language the more risks he takes, and if he appeals to a native who is proficient in

his language, he is safe. But the notion of risk may also be seen from another angle, that of deviation from what the participants in a conversation are entitled to expect at a given moment by virtue of the maxim of co-operation (Grice 1975) and the use of "politeness" in the interaction. It is in this sense that the call to the policeman for help is risky and the use of another language may involve no risk. In other words, we think that when planning and selecting the means useful for preventive compensation the learner/communicator must take into account the contextual elements which will form the basis of the interpretation of what he says (Gumperz 1977) so that he may compensate in an appropriate and effective way - that is, without impairing the coherence of the discourse.

2. REPAIR : COMPENSATION OF A THERAPEUTIC CHARACTER

LE CLIENT: Garçon, s'il vous plaît, j'voudrais un café-crème avec deux croissants.

LE SERVEUR: J'm'excuse, M'sieur, on n'a plus d'croissants ...

LE CLIENT: Ah bon, ben, ça fait rien, vous m'donnerez tout simplement un café noir alors.

LE SERVEUR: Quoi?

LE CLIENT: C'est ça, un ptit café alors ... avec deux croissants.

LE SERVEUR: Ecoutez, je viens d'vous dire, j'me suis mal exprimé ...

F. RAYNAUD, Les Croissants

2.1 Definition

We propose here to analyse the organization of what the ethnomethodologists have called "repair". As Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) have shown, repair is a procedure regularly employed in the organization of interactive discourse. It will be noted that repair may concern not only "errors" with regard to the use of the code - for example, syntactical or lexical errors, or "errors" of use, for example in the interpretation of a speech act, but also all the "errors" arising from the execution of the participants' production plans, such as hesitation, false starts, etc. What determines the repair of an element is the fact that one or other of the interactors has pinpointed this element as creating a problem of interpretation in the developing discourse. It is thus a control mechanism that enables participants in an interaction to ensure that everything is going satisfactorily for themselves and to indicate to their interlocutor, if necessary, that a problem exists.

Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) make a distinction between self-repair and other-repair and between self-correction and other-correction. The difference between "self" and "other" is central. "Self" and "other" are two classes of participants in interactive social organizations - more especially those which characterize the sequential organization of the conversation,

particularly its system of taking turns (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977). "Correction", i.e. the replacement of what is mistaken by what is correct, is only a special type of repair, since the phenomenon of repair does not depend on the chance of errors occurring and is not limited to the replacement of these. The authors note, in particular, that one can observe the phenomenon of repair even where there is no "replaceable" error or fault, e.g.:

> L: Is his one dollar alright or should he send more than that for the p-tuh cover the postage (1977, p.363)

What is more, some clearly audible errors do not cause the phenomenon to appear:

> Avon lady: and for ninety-nine cents uh especially in, Rapture, and the Au Coeur which is the newest fragrance, uh that is a very good value
>
> Customer: Uh huh

Another distinction to be made is that between the "initiation" and "outcome" of the procedure. The terms "self-repair" and "other-repair" (as well as the subcategory "correction") refer to the success of the procedure. When a repair procedure fails, this means that one can observe its initiation but that it does not culminate in a satisfactory solution. One must not confuse situations in which the repair procedure fails - that is, where one cannot observe either self-repair or other-repair - with situations in which one can observe the development of "trouble" due to an identifiable "trouble source" in an ex post facto analysis, but in which no effort is made to repair.

The authors show that the outcome of the procedure can be self-repair, other-repair or breakdown, regardless of whether the procedure is self-initiated or other-initiated.

Schlegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) explain the distinction between initiations which are effected by the speaker of the trouble source and initiations which are effected by some other person in terms of three rules for applying the repair procedure, which relate to the distribution in time of the moment of initiation and the means of effecting the initiation:

> (i) Self- and other-initiations have regular, and clearly different, placements relative to the trouble source whose repair they initiate. There are three possible positions for self-initiations and a single one for other-initiations (1977, pp.365f.).

(ii) Self- and other-initiations are typically and regularly effected by means of different techniques.

(iii) The trajectories from initiation to outcome are regular, but development differs according to whether the procedure was initiated by oneself or one's interlocutor. The vast majority of self-initiated repairs are accomplished successfully within the same turn as the initiation, whereas other-initiated repairs take multiple turns to get accomplished.

The conclusion to the analysis of the effects of these rules is of direct interest to us. It is that the connection between self-initiations and other-initiations is not accidental:

> Self-initiated repairs yield self-correction, and opportunities for self-initiation come first. Other-initiated repairs also yield self-correction; the opportunity available to the other to initiate repair is used to afford the speaker of a trouble source a further opportunity for self-repair, which he takes .... Although there is a distinction between self-correction and other-correction, self-correction and other-correction are not alternatives. Rather, the organization of repair in conversation provides centrally for self-correction, which can be arrived at by the alternative routes of self-initiation and other-initiation - routes which are themselves so organized as to favour self-initiated self-repair.
>
> (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977, p.377)

In this article, after showing the constraints which are imposed on other-correction as a repair procedure, the authors comment that they have been able to note one exception: the interaction between child and adult and in particular between parent and child. They then make the following hypothesis:

> It [= this procedure] may well be more generally relevant to the not-yet-competent in some domain without respect to age. There, other-correction seems to be not as infrequent, and appears to be one vehicle for socialisation. If that is so, then it appears that other-correction is not so much an alternative to self-correction in conversation in general, but rather a device for dealing with those who are still learning or being taught to operate with a system which requires, for its routine operation, that they be adequate self-monitors and self-correctors .... It is, in that sense, only a transitional usage, whose supersession by self-correction is continuously awaited.

2.2 Exploration of the hypothesis

It is this last hypothesis that Tealby (1980) has tried to explore by analysing two conversations between natives and non-natives. In one of the conversations (in French) the non-native is a Portuguese woman whose level of proficiency is very low. In the other (in English) the non-native is a Frenchwoman with a very high level of proficiency.

Four elements were considered in detail (see Appendix A for a short summary of the study):

(i) the distinction between initiation of the procedure and outcome;

(ii) the distinction between self-initiation and other-initiation;

(iii) the means employed during the trajectory between initiation and outcome;

(iv) the moments at which the initiation and outcome of the procedure took place.

This analysis makes it possible to answer three questions of direct importance for identifying the compensation strategies used in conversation:

(a) Are there more other-repairs and other-initiations when the non-native lacks proficiency than when the native is proficient - i.e. is there a correlation between the level of proficiency and the number of other-repairs?

(b) Does there exist an intermediary level of proficiency on the part of the non-native at which the number of self-repairs is high but the methods used are of a non-native character?

(c) Is the format of a conversation between native and non-native different from that of a conversation between native and native?

2.3 Discussion

2.3.1 Effect of the level of proficiency

Tealby's analysis shows that there is a marked difference between the two conversations and that there is a clear correlation between level of proficiency and the quantity and distribution of other-repair. It will be noted, how-

ever, that although other-initiation and other-repair appear more often in the conversation with the Portuguese woman than in the other, the proportion between other-repairs and other-initiation of the procedure is almost the same in both conversations, indicating that even when the non-native's level of proficiency is very low, the native "avoids" other-repair as far as possible. As Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) proposed, the native tries to make the non-native function in the same way as in a conversation between natives. With regard to the trajectory, the function of other-initiation is to lead to self-repair on the part of the speaker of the trouble source and not to other-repair. For it may be noted that the number of self-repairs is greater in the case of the Portuguese woman than in that of the Frenchwoman. At a low level of proficiency, therefore, one can observe an increase in the number of other-initiations and an increase in self-repairs.

2.3.2 Methods employed

E, who is the non-native in the first conversation (English) and the native in the second (French), shows that even at a high level of linguistic proficiency, her skill in varying and manipulating the methods is less great in the second language. But even if the regular use of filled pauses is very effective as a device for being able to keep on talking, the use - also regular - of the French rounded vowel [euh] betrays her origin. Thus beyond the strictly linguistic and paralinguistic field, the non-native, even if she is advanced, informs her interlocutor that she is a non-native by the way in which she effects repairs. But this does not seem to be important for the participants in a professional type of conversation like this one. One could, however, imagine that in certain circumstances such a trait might become a trouble source - for instance, when a spy is being interrogated.

On the other hand, the difficulties that the Portuguese woman has in producing and organizing utterances considerably affect the way in which the conversation proceeds, for she constantly uses unfilled pauses and consequently loses her turn. Thus one can see that a very important difference between the non-advanced and the advanced non-native is that the former uses self-repair techniques which make her lose control in the organization of the conversation, whereas the latter uses techniques which enable her to indicate something which one might paraphrase as follows: "Wait a second, I have a problem but I'll manage to solve it."

2.3.3 Specific characteristics of conversations between native and non-native due to organization by the native

2.3.3.1 The native's control over the organization of the conversation

As we have seen, when the non-native exhibits a low level of proficiency, the native becomes more active. Even if the result of his initiations is to cause the non-native to correct himself, this implies that he is dominating the scene and because of his competence in the language is exercising constant control over what is happening. This is an example of "competence power" (French 1956). In the conversation with the Portuguese woman, for instance, E not only introduces each topic in the conversation but does so in such a way that B is induced to reply: E requests information about X by means of simple questions, with very marked inflections of voice, as a result of which B is forced to reply. She is literally "called upon to speak". This is characteristic of the conversation as a whole: E asks a total of twenty-seven questions, of which only two are "rhetorical", in contrast to M, who asks only seven questions in his equally long conversation with E. We thus suggest that the domination of the native - itself due to organization of repair in the conversation - has a compensatory effect, but this is not a conscious strategy. The native "assumes power" because of the rules governing the organization of conversation and in order that the conversation may take place at all.

2.3.3.2 "Foreigner talk"

Another consequence that the organization of repair has for conversation between native and non-native is that, as the native is responsible for controlling the conversation, it is in his interests not to be a source of trouble, and he thus starts to make systematic use of "foreigner talk". While E's utterances show the results of a process of simplification but especially of clarification (Ferguson 1977), they also show that the native uses a simplified register so that the foreigner can understand her. This is particularly evident in repair work, where the means employed by the native - when she is obliged to effect the repair herself - tend to be strict replacements (correction), the rest of the utterance revealing the use of structures identical to those used by the non-native so that the replacement appears in the same context as the corrected element. For example:

E : et vot' famille et vot' belle-mère comment ça va?

B : ben ...

E : elle est toujours euh ...

B : i march con cane [kane]

E : pardon?

B : i march/'avec une canne [kan]

E : ah bon oui mais elle peut marcher oui et sa parole est difficile?

B : non non ...

E : elle peut parler?

B : un pt'it peu comme ça puis tremblé comme ça

E : ah! avec euh un tremblement

B : oui parce que ça fait déjà la deuxième

E : c'est le deuxième?

We thus would argue that the native's "foreigner talk" - itself due to the organization of repair in conversation - has a compensatory effect, but that it is not a conscious strategy. The native displays this linguistic behaviour because of the rules governing the organization of conversation and in order to be able to keep the possibilities of trouble to a minimum. The range of verbal means which he employs will depend largely on the verbal means which the non-native has at his disposal.

2.3.3.3 Obtaining information about the language: speech acts peculiar to the non-native?

KING HENRY : Do you like me, Kate?

KATE : Pardonnez moy, I cannot tell vat is "like me"

KING HENRY : An angel is like you, Kate, and you are like an angel.

SHAKESPEARE, Henry V - Act V, Sc.2

We have stressed the fact that repair functions in a systematic and unconscious way, giving the advantage to the native from the point of view of control and to the non-native from the linguistic point of view. This has an interesting effect which sometimes leads to disaster. For the operation of the repair procedure prevents the non-native from making his interlocutor understand what he is trying to do when he seeks to obtain information about the language. When the non-native attempts to ask meta-questions, there is regularly a crisis in the communication. Why?

We suggest that the crisis arises because, when the non-native wants to obtain information about the language, by implication he is changing not only the topic of the conversation (from X to LANGUAGE), but also the nature of the activity in which he and the native are engaged. But such changes are not made without prior negotiation, especially as they require the native to agree that for the time being the non-native should control operations. In terms of control, therefore, it is a very delicate situation since it threatens the established power.

There is another reason for the crisis. The incompetent non-native is typically incapable of obtaining information by employing appropriate means. In our opinion, the most interesting aspect of the notion of "modality reduction" (Kasper 1979, Roussel 1974) is precisely the effect it has on the course of the conversation. The most usual effect of a request for information about the language made <u>in media res</u>, without any prior signal to indicate that the significant context for the interpretation of the sentence has changed (Gumperz 1977, Cook-Gumperz 1976), is that the native interprets the utterance "the wrong way" and acts in an "inappropriate" manner from the non-native's point of view because they are no longer doing the same thing. They are no longer on the same wavelength, so to speak. In the following example E interprets the question "c'est à la pièce?" as a signal that her question has not been understood (she is expecting a yes/no answer) and makes a self-correction by replacing the copula by a specific verb known to B. That is, she has interpreted it as initiation of other-correction because it is a correction with regard to "est" in "est à la chaîne" - and she repeats it, whereas B is in fact asking: Are "à la chaîne" and "à la pièce" two synonymous terms? It is only in the following turn that B makes E understand that she does not know the meaning of "à la chaîne".

[Subject: B's daughter, who works in the local shirt factory]

52 B : i pique

53 E : oui, oui, elle travaille à la chaîne (long pause)

54 B : c'est à la pièce?

55 E : elle, elle travaille à la chaîne?

56 B : comment qu'c'est?

57 E : dans une chaîne euh travailler à la chaîne ça veut dire que euh on travaille euh en ayant une tâche très précise euh à faire de manière régulière

It will be noted that this example is highly interesting from the point of view of coherence (Riley 1980); for whereas both participants take their turn regularly at the interactive level, incoherence appears at the illocutionary level. Instead of adjacent pairs we have a sequence of four requests for information and both questions asked by B relate to the language.

It should also be noted that B's question in line 54 is her first question since the conversation started. It can easily be seen why the non-native's attempt to change course is indeed a discursive revolution.

One might be tempted to explain this phenomenon by saying that the speech acts which non-natives try to achieve are of a specific nature. It would be a most interesting exercise to draw up a list of those speech acts which seem to be peculiar to non-natives; certainly the frequency with which they occur is a source of problems. One thinks for example of "checking that the pronunciation of a word is correct", "requesting information on the synonymous or antonymous relations between two terms", "checking that a structure is appropriate to a particular register", etc. But this explanation is not adequate, as the following example, taken from Jordan and Fuller (1975), shows:

Q (3-15-73)

e : Un momento, po favor. Es clase en espanol. Como se dice el pasado de estar. Yo estuve.

V : Yo estuve, si.

e : (laughs) Si. Pero como se dice: yo estuve, tu (pause) el estuvo ...

V : nosotros estuvimos, ustedes estuvieron.

e : Ah Otre vez. Yo estuve, tu ...

V : Yo estuve.

e : No, no. Cuando nosotros hablamos, tu y yo, que dices a mi? Tu ...

V : Usted estuvo.

e : Ah no, no sirve. Diga me, que es correcto: estuviste o estuvaste?

V : Se dice estuciste.

e : Ah bueno! Muchas gracias, senor.

(p.23)

This example of a conversation in lingua franca shows clearly that even two "non-natives" together encounter the same problem. Here we even see that e is aware of the problem, since he takes the trouble to try to mark the change of subject and construct a different context ("es clase en espagnol"), but he fails lamentably.

It thus seems more reasonable to seek the cause of this particular difficulty in the way in which non-natives negotiate this special aspect of repair, which consists in changing the topic of the conversation and type of activity, and thus performing acts which, in the other person's eyes, violate the maxim of relevance (Grice 1975).

Let us sum up here by saying that the repair procedure has at least two compensatory effects on conversation between natives and non-natives: the native controls the organization of the conversation, and the native's language harmonizes with that of the non-native (this is explainable in terms of simplification and clarification). Lastly, a "repair strategy" exists which seems regularly to fail at the tactical level: the embedding of a "language class" type of activity (Levinson 1979) in the activity in progress.

2.3.4 Factors influencing compensation in conversation

The above study is only of an exploratory character, and the question of compensation strategies is clearly more complex than that. In this section, we shall only touch on a number of problems, each of which merits detailed treatment.

2.3.4.1 Activity type, role, and topic of conversation

Although the repair procedure is applied automatically, the extent of its effects can be controlled by the native according to the type of activity in progress. In the case of the conversation with the Portuguese woman, for instance, the type of activity could be called "gossiping" or "having a chat". It consists of a series of mini-conversations, each having as its subject a different member of the Portuguese woman's family. All the mini-conversations proceed according to a very clear plan once they have started, but the activity itself might stop at the end of any one of these conversations at the signal of one or other of the participants. This is what finally happens. Obviously E has the time, but above all E and B are not engaged in an activity whose outcome will have important consequences depending on whether it is a success or failure. One can thus observe the operation of the repair procedure and its effects without external social pressures intervening to any great extent. One could imagine that it would be otherwise in commercial or administrative types of transaction where the purpose of the transaction is clearly defined and where speaking forms a more or less integral part of the activity (Levinson 1979). In such an activity, like the purchase/sale of postage stamps, it is to be expected that the native, if he is the post-office employee, will develop routines for conducting the transaction as efficiently as possible when his customer is a non-native. He will make maximum use of non-verbal methods and there will probably be very little harmonization of his language with that of the non-native. In other words, at the least sign of a problem he will make full use of the control which his competence power and his role as an administrator legitimately allow him to exercise. Thus a communicative framework is established which has explosive potential if the non-native deviates in any way from the "script" provided, because the inference schemata (Levinson 1979) are linked with the structural properties of the activity as it was intended by the person possessing control. An excellent example of a breakdown in communication "at the post office" is contained in the television programme Crosstalk, broadcast by the BBC in the Man Alive series on 1 May 1979.

An example of the way in which activity type, role, and topic interact (Ervin-Tripp 1964 and 1973) and influence the organization of repair - and hence compensation - can be found in the treatment of one of the preventive compensation strategies mentioned in the literature reviewed in the first part of this paper. If the activity is "carrying out a linguistic test", the appeal to the other is called "appeal to authority" and is an evasion (Tarone, Cohen and Dumas 1976). If the activity turns into "telling a story based on pictures" it is no longer an evasion and the strategy is termed "call for help", but the strategy falls flat because the experimenter cannot help (Tarone 1977). Lastly, when the activity becomes "free conversation concerning the language used in the test" non-natives have no difficulty in getting satisfaction when they try to obtain some information about the language (Tarone 1977). Yet, as we have seen, this is precisely the type of compensation which leads to breakdowns in conversations bearing on quite another topic.

2.3.4.2 Compensation and politeness

It will have been noted from the foregoing that repair in conversation is a very effective means to control social interaction as regards politeness (in Brown and Levinson's 1978 definition). For repair is indissolubly linked with the notion of a threat to the "face" of the interactors and of intrusion into their territory; and it is a procedure which enables everyone to "save face", since even other-repair leads to self-initiated self-correction. What is more, the repair procedure achieves its effect in an indirect (diminished) way by using the distribution in time of the sequential structure of the interaction as a whole in order to give the advantage to self-initiated self-correction. But, as we have seen in the interaction between native and non-native, when the latter lacks proficiency, even if the operation of the procedure tends to make him act as if he were proficient, it releases a whole series of face-threatening acts (Roulet 1980). From this point of view one could say that compensation and, more especially, the control exercised by the non-native and the use of "foreigner talk" by the native are two tools which lessen the threat. For the general effect of these two phenomena is to reduce the occasions when the repair of the non-native by the native becomes necessary. The very organization of the procedure, and in particular the moments when initiation and outcome can take place, ensures, moreover, that a large part of the work is carried out in an allusive way, and when the native openly exercises control, it is attenuated firstly by the sequence of turns, which enables the non-native to

correct himself, and secondly by the use of a register "guaranteed to be without risk".

This appears to be one of the reasons why the native reacts badly when the non-native seeks to obtain information about the language in media res. For, whereas the whole system seems to function at all levels in order to give the advantage to the non-native so that his face may be saved, a metalinguistic question is an open face-threatening act without attenuating action, and thus, by the simple effect of contrast, leads to a breakdown.

2.3.4.3 "Tout le monde il est beau, tout le monde il est gentil"

We have already indicated in the foregoing section that repair is a very complex phenomenon and one which it is not easy to regulate. If the system is so well oiled, how does it happen that there are so many breakdowns in communication between non-natives and natives? Why does compensation fail so often? We will mention only a few factors.

2.3.4.3.1 The personality of the interactors

Even at a fairly low level of proficiency, certain non-natives, noticing the control exercised over them by the native, will react negatively because they do not like people "stepping on their toes". This usually leads to disaster because the non-native does not possess the linguistic means to express this reaction and also because the native, for whom this taking of control is not voluntary but simply the effect of the repair procedure, usually does not understand what is happening. It is a violation of co-operation. On the other hand, if a native uses other powers to "crush" the non-native, the situation may easily become degrading for the non-native. If, moreover, one uses the pretext that simplifications and clarifications are necessary in order to speak to an adult as if he were not developed cognitively, this is no longer compensation at all. It is the use of quasi-compensation in order to impose one's power and an excuse to shift from "foreigner talk" to "baby talk". This happens (too) often at police stations.

There are those who take advantage of power and those who want to wield it too soon in an interaction, but after all there are many non-natives who consent almost too willingly - at

least when they are abroad - to being led by others and remaining dependent. There are those who take advantage of their linguistic dependence to "behave like babies". One could perhaps say that they lose their sense of personal identity as a result of compensation.

2.3.4.3.2 Fatigue and frustration

- Papa!

- Fous-moi la paix, fils d'imbécile!

- Oui papa.

- Fais attention à ce que tu dis, hein! et si tu veux jouer les idiots avec moi, nous serons deux et c'est toi qui perdra.

F. RAYNAUD, C'est étudié pour

As we saw in the example of the conversation with the Portuguese woman, exercising compensation is very trying for the interactors. Teachers know only too well that it is extremely tiring work to converse with non-proficient pupils. This is one of the reasons why a foreigner finds himself isolated socially. The community tends to avoid all conversation other than what is strictly necessary (Schumann 1976).

For those lacking proficiency the work of compensation is so frustrating that some of them develop routines to pretend to be proficient in certain situations. The effect of this is to make the non-native socially acceptable and thus to remove certain tensions. Scarcella (1979) quotes a passage in which a Venezuelan keeps up a "conversation" with a friend by ensuring coherency at several levels: the interactive level (he takes his turn), the illocutionary level (he requests information and acquiesces in the replies), and at the level of content (what's this + non-verbal [pointing and nodding] + uhuh and yeah). In fact it was subsequently realized that he understood absolutely nothing of what his friend was saying. Anyone who has lived abroad will recognize this as being a saving device to enable one to function socially even though completely cut off from the

situation.

This strategy is usually readily accepted by the native, who is thereby absolved from the responsibility of exercising control. It is an illusory kind of conversation and the lie is negotiated in such a way that everyone saves face. Here our two approaches converge, since it is really a preventive compensation strategy for evading the effects of the compensation procedure.

2.3.4.3.3 Cultural interference

When the non-native imports the inference schemata of certain activity types and the representation of certain roles, difficulties ensue which cannot be pinpointed by the native with whom he is interacting because they are not accessible to him (at least during the interaction). These are "irreparable" situations in which the whole organization of the conversation, including repair - and hence compensation - contributes to the general lack of understanding (cf. the Crosstalk programme referred to in 2.3.4.1 above).

3 LINGUISTIC AND PEDAGOGIC LEARNING OF COMPENSATION

TOPAZE (il dicte en se promenant):

> Des moutons ... Des moutons ... étaient en sûreté ... dans un parc; dans un parc (il se penche sur l'épaule de l'élève et reprend). Des moutons ... moutonss ... (l'élève le regarde, ahuri). Voyons, mon enfant, faites un effort. Je dis moutonsse. Etaient (il reprend avec finesse) étai-eunnt. C'est-à-dire qu'il n'y avait pas qu'un moutonne. Il y avait plusieurs moutonsse.

M. PAGNOL: Topaze

3.1 Foreigner talk and baby talk

We would suggest that in the native/non-native interaction as in the mother/child interaction, the behaviour of the proficient person, which consists in his adapting himself to the non-proficient, emanates primarily from a desire to communicate, and linguistic instruction is a by-product of that (Brown 1977; Ferguson 1971, 1977). What the non-native needs in order to learn the language in a very real and precise way is a register adapted to his own (see the example of the Portuguese woman above). It seems appropriate in this connexion to compare foreigner talk with baby talk. But the difference between the baby and the non-native are considerable. The native may make big efforts to communicate with a non-proficient foreigner, but he does so only if he has the time or the desire or if it is absolutely necessary or if he is paid to do so. This underlines the significance of the fact that B, the Portuguese woman, has lived in France for over ten years. Making conversation in French is not a daily activity for her, particularly as Portuguese is spoken in her home. We see here one of the fundamental reasons why adults become fossilized in an immersion situation. The influence of social setting on language development has been demonstrated time and again (Schumann 1976), and it has even been shown that children in an immersion situation develop a dialect peculiar to their group if they are not in contact with native speakers of the same age (Selinker, Swain and Dumas 1974).

It will be recalled, moreover, that repair fails hopelessly as soon as the non-native tries to obtain from the native some information about the language, at least until such time as the non-native's linguistic knowledge enables him to do so in an appropriate way. It would seem reasonable to suppose that, in a society which claims to be democratic, it would be desirable to create situations whose aim is to give information about the language, and in which the conventions are such that this information may be obtained without the non-native's level of ability

to communicate affecting its quality and quantity. There are at least two reasons for this: learning - at any rate at the start - should be accelerated, but also the potential for socialization in the foreign society which competence in the language creates should be a factor making for equality of opportunity and mobility. The classroom, moreover, may be thought of as a favourable place for providing training in preventive compensation strategies, as part of the teaching of proficiency in communication.

3.2 Pedagogics of compensation

It is clear that compensation will not only play a major role in communicative language teaching but will necessarily be one of its aims, since communicating with a restricted linguistic system increases the participants' difficulties not only in interpreting and expressing their communicative intentions but also in negotiating (with themselves and with their interlocutor) agreement as to the meaning of the utterances chosen. Teachers have taught for too long as if their pupils were going to leave the class with perfect linguistic (or communicative) proficiency. They have, moreover, been using techniques which prevented compensation from being exercised - by rejecting an astute "approximation", for instance, or by interrupting a reply as soon as a "wrong" element has appeared. By trying to prevent linguistic errors from occurring one also prevents learning strategies and compensation strategies from being exercised. The general apathy displayed in classrooms reflects the only option remaining open to "bad pupils": to withdraw from the situation and sit dejectedly at the back of the class. On the other hand, the exercise of compensation has a particularly motivating aspect since it enables all participants to act as intelligent individuals and offers people who are "not gifted for languages" the possibility of succeeding as well as the talented ones.

3.2.1 Target competence

The "target competence" (Breen and Candlin 1980) aimed at by the non-native is "communicative competence" as defined by Hymes (1971). It is the capacity to make the most of slender resources for communicative purposes.

This capacity implies that one can make judgments about one's own resources in order to ensure coherent discourse at the interactive level (taking of turns), at the illocutionary level (communicative intention and choice of an appropriate act), at the level of the propositional content, and at the level of the means for achieving it. At each level the speaker must be able to decide whether he must act, whether he can act according to his intentions given the means at his disposal, whether he can change his intentions without undue harm and, if he cannot or will not change his intentions, whether he can analyse the value of what he lacks. Is X unknown, or known but inaccessible, or quite

simply difficult to achieve? It is only when all this has been weighed that the speaker can decide to compensate or abandon, and this implies access to all the resources of compensation and an ability to select those which seem the most appropriate. Thus the plan of execution is drawn up and carried out, and then the speaker or his interlocutor can start to apply the repair procedure if necessary.

Once the decision to compensate has been taken, it will be all the easier to carry it out if there are many means at one's disposal, but the choices will become more and more complex.

3.2.2 The learners' contribution

Learners will bring with them a whole battery of methods which they use in their mother tongue, but it may well be that they are not good compensators in their own language (that is, they do not say what they want to say, or employ only very few means, or again choose badly: for example, drown their lack of precision in a flood of words). Perhaps, too, they are not as competent as all that in their mother tongue (they do not employ many alternative linguistic means, for example, because they have little skill in reorganizing information semantically or their vocabulary is small). It will be noted that a limited proficiency in the mother tongue does not necessarily go hand in hand with effective compensation strategies: there are people who are excellent communicators although their language is very poor, but there are also people who have a poor knowledge of the language and yet do not attempt or manage to compensate by other means.

Personality plays a major role in the choice of means. The methods which a learner does not use reveal the image he has of himself, and he will probably want to preserve this image in the second language.

It should be noted that a direct "transfer" of the compensation means used by someone in his mother tongue will not always be effective: certain gestures which are acceptable in one society are taboo in another, and a study of word-associations by non-natives (Meara 1978) makes it possible to predict that they will use totally incomprehensible paraphrases. The target repertoire will have to include compensatory tools which are specific to communication in the second language and especially the use of a competent person as a source of linguistic information.

3.2.3 Pedagogics of preventive compensation (see Appendix B)

3.2.3.1 Sensitization by the first language

Aim: to become aware of the field and available resources and to know oneself and one's preferences.

3.2.3.2 Action on oneself

Aims:

(i) To increase one's capacity to foresee difficulties. Here we note the importance of taking account of the differences between learners as regards their mother tongue but also the particular difficulties they may have in the second language.

(ii) To increase one's resources and to learn strategies. This may be achieved by means of games in which the use of a particular method is made easier by the nature of the task. For paraphrase, for instance, one can use a task which entails the use of a vocabulary one knows to be unfamiliar. However, the use of other methods is never forbidden.

(iii) To increase one's capacity to judge of appropriate compensatory resources (constraints) and to select them (preferences).

3.2.3.3 Multidimensionality

Although activities encouraging the use of non-verbal methods are especially useful with groups of beginners, the very nature of the learning of compensation involves a kind of progression. This would gradually exclude the use of non-verbal aids in favour of linguistic means in the second language, with an "intermediate" stage allowing the learner to use his first language.

3.2.3.4 Use of games as activity types

To be able to handle in an appropriate way the activity type in which one is engaged is a necessary precondition for coherent discourse. All the participants in the class must know very precisely what is being accomplished, what one is trying to do, and what are the "rules of the game". If an activity consists of re-

peating sentences of twenty words without hesitating, that is precisely what one will do. The problem is not to bring into the classroom activities which resemble the activities of life outside, but to make use of the human potential of the class regarded as a special social group, since it has been formed in order to enable participants to communicate by means of a second common language. Communicating in the second language is really the essential topic of conversation and organizing oneself to achieve this, as well as inventing activities for cultivating the ability to compensate, forms part of the group's tasks. The more independent the group is the more adventurous it will become and the less it will call on the teacher's competence for its organization. The teacher will then become one of the natives (or non-natives) proficient in the second language who are accessible to the group.

In order to formulate activities it is necessary to specify one's aims very precisely. In this way the participants will be able to discuss observed compensatory strategies and evaluate for themselves the methods employed, necessarily making allowances for their differences and individual characteristics.

3.2.4 Learning to ask for information about the second language

As we have seen, this is a particularly risky type of activity when the non-native has a low level of proficiency. For as far as the methods are concerned, to carry out such an activity successfully implies that a change of activity and a change of topic can be negotiated, and that this can be done in a polite manner - i.e. by manipulating modality or by using appropriate compensatory methods to replace modality (cf. the example from Shakespeare quoted at the beginning of 2.3.3.3 above).

That the learning of modality should give rise to special activities and games designed to teach pupils how to modulate functions (Roussel 1974) so as to attenuate face-threatening acts is one thing. It is a highly desirable aim since it is the most powerful learning tool available to the learner. In one sense, once he can obtain information about the language in an appropriate way the learner no longer needs to be taught. But even with complete beginners it is possible to integrate this activity in a natural way without impairing the coherence of the discourse at any level. We would mention in particular the group/counsellor interaction developed by Curran (1972).

3.2.5 Repair

Repair cannot be taught. It takes place automatically as soon as there is an authentic oral interaction. It is so helpful to the non-native who wants to learn the language that its use should not be hindered. But this challenges a whole pedagogical tradition of immediate correction by the teacher.

The golden rule that we propose is: THE RULES FOR APPLYING THE REPAIR PROCEDURE SHOULD NEVER BE BROKEN.

We should remember that these rules are applied very specifically and regularly in interactive, oral, verbal and spontaneous discourse. We therefore believe that when any communicative activity of this type takes place, classroom discourse must show the following characteristics: virtual absence of other-correction and a large number of trajectories of the type: initiation into other-correction culminating in self-correction. A teacher who has acquired the habit of interrupting his students during exchanges, or of simply admonishing them for mistakes which do not impair communication, might subject himself to a re-education exercise by allowing himself to intervene only non-verbally. In a small group he will quickly notice that his gestures are noticed by the others only when it is his turn and that they are always interpreted as bearing on what is happening in the conversation rather than on its form.

A teacher who agrees to be simply a communicator will soon realize that he is going to have to reformulate his utterances (self-correction), repeat correctly utterances which are incorrect (checking that he has understood aright) and accept utterances which are incorrect but significant (Holley and King 1974).

3.2.6 The teacher's schizophrenia

It is not necessary for the teacher to feel himself torn between two roles: that of a communicating adult and that of a language teacher. As a rule teachers play ambiguous psychological roles only because they do not know how to make use of their competence power. If other-correction is an anti-productive act, the solution is not to learn to refrain from other-correction but to maintain one's role as a competent adult without destroying the coherency of the discourse at the interactive and illocutionary level in particular (Riley 1977; Sinclair et al. 1972). This makes it necessary, among other things, for sincerity conditions to be respected. If, for instance, the pupils are carrying out an activity in small groups, they may interrupt their activity to come and ask the competent person for information about the language. If, on the other hand, the teacher circulates among the groups and interrupts the groups' acti-

vities whenever an error is heard, this is an abuse of competence power arising from the ambiguity of the teacher's role because of the power which his position gives him (Gremmo, Holec and Riley 1977).

CONCLUSION

Whether compensation is preventive - and thus very difficult to observe - or therapeutic, it is an important phenomenon for the development of communicative and linguistic competence.

We should like to conclude by pointing to the connexion which exists between this phenomenon and independence. The more independent a learner is, the more capable he will be of analysing what his own preventive strategies seek to camouflage and of turning them into language learning aims. Repair is an excellent tool for developing the capacity to be independent since it is a regulatory system which has the effect of making the learner accept responsibility for his mistakes.

APPENDIX A

A system for the analysis of repair procedure

The four relevant factors - (1) Initiation of repair, (2) Repair, (3) Location of repair, and (4) Self/Other - can be represented as set out below. In this way it is possible to cover seven cases of possible trajectories as from the moment when the trouble source appears (and forms the subject of repair work). Each trajectory is identified by a letter of the alphabet. Note that the factor SELF/OTHER combines with (1) and (2) depending on whether initiation is made by self or other and repair is made by self or other. Thus:

S.I. = self-initiation S.R. = self-repair

O.I. = other-initiation O.R. = other-repair

Case 1	A	1st turn	S.I.	S.R.
Case 2	B	transition space	S.I.	S.R.
Case 3	C	2nd turn	O.I.	(S.R. in 3rd turn)
Case 4	D	2nd turn	O.I.	O.R.
Case 5	E	2nd turn	O.R.	(S.I. in 1st/2nd turns)
Case 6	F	3rd turn	S.I.	S.R.
Case 7	G	4th turn or later	O.R.	(O.I. in 2nd turn)

N.B. the second column gives the code used in analysis. The third column refers to the turn (counted as from the moment when the trouble source appears) in which the outcome of the repair procedure is observed. The turns indicated in brackets in the last column refer to turns in which the procedure was initiated.

The other factor analysed, i.e. the means employed, was represented by numbers as follows:

1 = silent pause

2 = filled pause

3 = repeats

4 = unretraced false start

5 = retraced false start

6 = corrections (well, I mean, or rather)

7 = interjections

8 = stutters

9 = questions (huh?, y'mean?, who?, what?)

10 = questions plus partial trouble source repetition

11 = components unused in trouble-source turn

Techniques 1 to 8 are typically S.I. and S.R. strategies; techniques 9 to 11 are typically O.I. and O.R. strategies.

Example of use of the analysis system (conversation in English: competent non-native):

1. E: O.K. So I'll ta ..., I'll try to take Room 12

2. and euh I'll try to make sure that she's got a table

3. which is euh ... euh a sort of low table which people can

4. see from euh from the / back

5./6. M: [yeah] / obviously he ... well, low, I mean

7. no ... normal height

Commentary

Line 1: E makes false start; she self-repairs in the same turn by retracing to "I'll" and replacing "ta" by "try". This is marked A5.

Line 2: pause filled by "euh": A2.

Line 3: A2

Line 4: A2

Line 5: M begins an answer but changes his mind over what to say first. He abandons the false start and self-repairs without retracing: A4.

Line 6: M now repairs E's use of the word "low" in the preceding

turn by use of correction words and partial trouble source repetition: D5/10.

Line 7: M has trouble in articulating "normal" and self-repairs through stutter: A8.

We thus have:	E (trouble-source turn)		M (trouble-source turn)	
	A2	3	A4	1
	A5	1	A8	1
	D6/10	1		

Summary of results:

CONVERSATION 1 (530 lines) Competent non-native = E
Native = M

			Division of figures by 5.3 in order to compare with CONVERSATION 2
E effected S.R.	(A,B,C,F)	252 times	47.5
M effected S.R.	"	203 times	38.3
E effected O.I.	(C,D,G)	5 times	0.9
M effected O.I.	"	6 times	1.1
E effected O.R.	(D,E,G)	3 times	0.6
M effected O.R.	"	3 times	0.6

CONVERSATION 2 (100 lines) Non-competent non-native = B
Native = E

E effected S.R.	(A,B,C,F)	22 times
B effected S.R.	"	61 times
E effected O.I.	(C,D,G)	17 times
B effected O.I.	"	2 times
E effected O.R.	(D,E,G)	4 times
B effected O.R.	"	2 times

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLES OF TASKS

Sensitization in first language

- Giving someone instructions on how to draw a geometric figure on the blackboard. (The organization of the information may vary considerably from one individual to another).

- Describing complex pictures or cartoons presenting lexical problems.

- Asking someone to bring a precise object from one end of the room to the other against a deafeningly noisy background.

Increasing the ability to foresee difficulties

- Mastermind (English televison game). The learner is examined on the subject of supermarkets, for example. Questions are put to him. The time is limited and his score is determined by the number of questions which he answers. He may decide to avoid by saying "Pass". The winner is the person who can judge very rapidly his ability to produce the right word in time and not necessarily the person who knows most about the subject.

Increase of resources

- Word coinage: knowing that strawberries grow on strawberry plants; knowing that apples grow on apple trees. Order a number of fruit-trees from a list of fruits.

- Approximations: you are in a hardware store and need to buy the necessary materials for redecorating your kitchen; you have made a list in English for ordering some groceries and telephone to the grocer in French.

- Information transmission games: Group A listens to a story or some news items in the mother tongue; each member of the group then relates what he has heard to a member of Group B; each member of Group B then recounts his story or news items.

Judging the appropriate means

- Sensitization to problems of co-operation and politeness: study of humour in sketches (F. Raynaud, Monty Python, etc.) based on the systematic breaching of Grice's maxims; recordings of "breakdowns".

- Game tasks: utilization of the actual abilities of members of the group; for example, an engineer has to explain to a doctor how an appliance works, and the doctor knows he will finally have to use the appliance and explain how it works to the other members of the group.

- Modality reduction: activities changed into really threatening acts for the group. For example, with advanced persons, activities in L2 on the way the group functions, the way the teacher teaches, or each group member's degree of intelligibility described by the others. With beginners, in twos or threes: find out how to assemble an appliance.

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